

**Name of the Library:** Brooklyn Public Library

**Address of Central Library:** Grand Army Plaza  
Brooklyn, NY 11238,  
718-230-2403



**Management:** Executive Director Ginnie Cooper joined Brooklyn Public Library, the fifth largest independent library system in the United States, in January of 2003. Prior to joining the Brooklyn Public Library, Ms. Cooper was Director of the Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon, serving 750,000 people. At Multnomah County, she oversaw the renovation of the Central Library and all the branch libraries. As a result of several specific tax elections, library funding was increased. Under her leadership, Multnomah County Library became one of the busiest libraries in the country. From 1981 to 1990, Ms. Cooper served as Director of Alameda County Library in Fremont, California, where she built new funding sources and strengthened community partnerships. Ms. Cooper worked in libraries and schools in Minnesota, Wisconsin and South Dakota.

**Number of Branch Libraries:** Central Library and 60 Branch Libraries

**Facilities:** The \$2.5 million renovation and expansion of the Brooklyn Public Library's Youth Wing at the Central Library created a large space dedicated to children and teens. The Youth Wing's welcoming environment encourages learning and creativity. The Youth Wing includes a state-of-the-art Technology Loft with 36 iMac computers, children's and young adult reading and reference areas, a preschool area, a craft and storytelling room, and a program room.

The Central Library Plaza of the Brooklyn Public Library will undergo a dramatic renovation to become an inviting, active destination for the public. Beneath the Plaza, the renovation will also include a new large-scale auditorium with multi-purpose meeting rooms and exhibition space, which will serve as another much-needed public forum.

The Plaza's new incarnation is envisioned as a giant outdoor reading room and performance space, with an outdoor café and retail/information kiosks to extend the library experience. A channel of running water and landscaping will provide a soothing natural backdrop to this cornerstone of the famed Grand Army Plaza. The new design will integrate elements of the Plaza's original historic features.

Construction is scheduled to be completed in August of 2006. Other new additions to the Plaza will include lighting, furniture, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant ramps, granite plaza paving, and the restoration of the entrance's gold-leaf figures and bronze doors.

Brooklyn Public Library is in the process of creating a bold and precedent-setting Visual & Performing Arts Library (VPA) that will be a physical and virtual gateway to arts resources of all kinds. As the first library in New York City devoted to the visual and performing arts, Brooklyn's VPA will foster artistic and economic growth for emerging and established arts communities. Artists, performers and the general public will be able to enjoy a wide array of arts resources, library services and performance spaces.

The Visual and Performing Arts Library will cost approximately \$75 million. Construction is expected to commence in 2006, with completion projected for 2008. The facility will include reading rooms and books; electronic and traditional resources; collections, programs, amenities and creative spaces for children and teens; a multimedia lounge with 24/7 online access; a state-of-the-art auditorium; a black box theater; artist studios; practice and study rooms; viewing and listening rooms; a café; and retail space. The VPA collections will cover the subjects of art, theater, dance, music, film, photography, architecture and more. Archives will house the records of Brooklyn's arts communities and chronicle the borough's history of dance, music and other visual and performing arts.



**Architecture:** Opened on February 1, 1941, the Central Library is the major reference center for the Brooklyn Public Library System. The library's notable architecture was created to resemble an open book, with the spine on Grand Army Plaza and the building's two wings opening like pages onto Eastern Parkway and Flatbush Avenue.

**Technology:** As an independent system, separate from the New York City and Queens libraries, Brooklyn Public Library serves the borough's 2.5 million residents, offering thousands of public programs, millions of books and use of more than 850 free Internet-accessible computers.

**Programming:** The Multilingual Center is located at the Brooklyn Public Library Central Library, the Center houses approximately 150,000 books, magazines and

newspapers in the major languages spoken in Brooklyn, including Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Hebrew and Haitian Creole. Materials in French, Yiddish, Hindi, Bengali, Polish, Italian and Arabic are also prominent among the 30 languages represented. The Center is equipped with computer workstations that feature software in languages other than English. Special programs including lectures, films, and performances as well as social service information are offered on a regular basis.

Brooklyn Public Library participates in CLASP (Connecting Libraries and Schools Project), a library-based partnership that links elementary and intermediate schools with libraries to make reading and books an integral part of the lives of Brooklyn schoolchildren. The many services CLASP provides include library cards for children, trips to libraries, librarian visits to schools, workshops for teachers, family reading activities, and after-school and weekend programs for youngsters, and great graded booklists.

Brooklyn Public Library offers a wide variety of cultural programs from around the world. Diverse offerings at the Central Library and neighborhood libraries include Russian, Italian, Latino, and Caribbean author readings, Brooklyn Writers for Brooklyn Readers author talks, film series, walking tours and day trips. Compelling exhibitions have ranged from Brooklyn fashion designers, to the history of pre-Civil War African-American homesteaders, to the history of the pop-up book. BPL recently created the Willendorf Division for Programs, Events & Exhibitions to increase the breadth and caliber of the Library's cultural and educational offerings.

**Collections:** BPL collections and services include a 30-language Multilingual Center with a repository of approximately 150,000 books, magazines and newspapers including Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Hebrew and Haitian Creole.

**Staff:** The Brooklyn Public Library has a staff of 1,200 full-time and 500 part-time employees, along with 500 volunteers.